CAMPAIGN FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS AMONG INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

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AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

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The important thing, therefore, is to convince the employees of the importance of annual examinations and to inspire them to take steps to correct the impairments that are found. The writer believes that the most effective way of securing the cooperation of employees is through the mutual benefit association, which assures them adequate health supervision and medical attention, life insurance equal to one and one-half times the annual salary, payable in case of death or total disability, and two-thirds pay for 26 weeks in case of sickness or accidents not covered by the workmen's compensation laws. Such an association lays a foundation for an interest in preventive work and employer and employees will work together in it for a common purpose.

Campaign for the Prevention of Blindness Among Industrial Workers

A NATION-WIDE educational campaign for the prevention of blindness and the conservation of vision among the industrial workers of America and among their families will be launched immediately as a joint effort of the American Federation of Labor and the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness according to a recent announcement by the latter organization.

The Society for the Prevention of Blindness has for some 20 years led the fight for conservation of vision; the Federation of Labor is now joining hands with this society for an intensive campaign within the membership of the federation because of requests for assistance in health education which have come to the Washington headquarters of the American Federation of Labor from various State and local labor bodies and because of the growing seriousness of the eye hazards of industrial occupations.

In announcing the campaign, Lewis H. Carris, managing director of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, declared:

> The campaign is being undertaken because of our conviction that the eye hazards of industrial occupations—that is, accidents, diseases affecting the eye, and eyestrain—now constitute probably the most serious cause of blindness and impairment of vision among workmen in America. It is the belief of the officers of both organizations that a very large percentage of industrial blindness is preventable and that many of the eye hazards in the home, on the street, and in other places outside of industry, which at present threaten the sight of the wives and children of our workmen, also are avoidable.

The campaign for the prevention of blindness will be carried on through the various publications of the American Federation of Labor and of local labor bodies, through radio broadcasting, exhibits in the meeting places of labor organizations, and other avenues of health education. The announcement of the campaign by the American Federation of Labor and the Society for the Prevention of Blindness says:

> The seriousness of the situation which this campaign seeks to correct may be appreciated when one thinks of the following few facts: The industries of this country are at present paying approximately $10,000,000 a year compensation to workmen who have been totally or permanently blinded while at work. This expense is inevitably reflected in the cost of commodities and thereby in the cost of living. The direct loss to the working men and women of America through lowered efficiency or earning capacity following blindness or serious impairment of vision is probably much more than $10,000,000 a year. There is a further loss, intangible, but probably even more serious than the foregoing, in the tragedy

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No consistent correlation between sanitary conditions and pellagra incidence was demonstrated by the study, but such association as was at times observed was regarded as accidental and due to the intimate relation of the endemic disease to economic status, of which the sanitary condition is often an index.

There was a striking inverse correlation shown between the incidence of the disease and family income, the study of the selected village for nearly six years demonstrating that income shortage was a fundamental, though indirect, controlling factor in the year-to-year fluctuation in the occurrence of the disease. It seems evident, therefore, that the fluctuations from year to year are largely the effect of economic conditions that influence the ability of a certain section of the population to procure an adequate diet.

Fifth International Congress on Industrial Accidents and Occupational Diseases[1]

THE Fifth International Congress on Industrial Accidents and Occupational Diseases was held in Budapest, Hungary, September 2–8, with approximately 2,400 delegates present, representing countries in all parts of the world. The conference represents an earnest effort to establish a clearing house in order more effectually to combat industrial accidents and occupational diseases, and national committees appointed by the congress are active in most of the civilized countries. About 40 delegates were registered from the United States, 18 of whom formed a study group and, traveling together, visited clinics in Berlin, Vienna, Munich, southern France, and Spain, either before or after the congress.

Two hundred and six papers were read in one or another of the four official languages of the conference—English, French, German, and Italian—12 of these papers being presented by the American group. The papers read by the American delegates dealt with methods of treatment of traumatic conditions or diseases, with the effects of various poisonous vapors, the periodic health examination in industry, the medicolegal aspects of occupational diseases, the determination of permanent disability following head injuries, and occupational ear, nose, and throat diseases among American factory workers. Three of the papers represented the work of the Reconstruction Hospital in New York.

A resolution adopted by the conference dealt with the question of first aid and of after-treatment in cases of accident caused by electric currents, it being the opinion of the congress that the care given to electrical injuries is insufficient in all countries. The resolution states that there is "much to be desired in the field of electropathology and electric accidents as regards the treatment by doctors; likewise, as to knowledge by engineers in most countries of the dangers of electricity and protection against them."

The members of the congress put forward the request to the Government of every country that they should give every attention to the treatment of electric accidents just as the teaching of their prevention and practical instruction in a

[1] Journal of the American Medical Association, Chicago, Nov. 24, 1928, p. 1652.

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